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District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PHOENIX WOMEN PLEADS GUILTY TO STEALING \$113,000 IN GOVERNMENT FUNDS

PHOENIX – Crystal L. Koehler, 34, of Phoenix, Arizona, pleaded guilty to theft of government funds on July 3.

Koehler was charged with the crime on June 8, 2007. In her guilty plea, Koehler acknowledged that between March 1999 and March 2006, she stole \$113,000 in social security benefits. On March 4, 1999, Koehler's grandmother died. The Social Security Administration was not notified of this fact and, as a result, social security benefits continued to be direct deposited into the grandmother's bank account. Over a seven year period, Koehler used her deceased grandmother's ATM card to withdraw those benefits. In her guilty plea, Koehler admitted that when she stole the funds, she was not entitled to receive them and intended to permanently deprive the United States of the use and benefit of the money. Koehler further admitted to using the funds to purchase various personal items and pay personal expenses.

A conviction for theft of government funds carries a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment and a maximum fine of \$250,000. In determining an actual sentence, the sentencing district court judge will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Sentencing is set before Judge Neil V. Wake on September 10, 2007.

The investigation in this case was conducted by Troy Turk, Office of Inspector General, Social Security Administration. The prosecution is being handled by Robert Long, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-07-807-PHX-NVM
RELEASE NUMBER: 2007-162(Koehler)

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